

Jamila Davis #59253-053

Danbury Federal Prison Camp

33 1/2 Pembroke Rd

Danbury CT 06811

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U.S. DISTRICT COURT

2012 FEB -1 P 2:17

Re: Case No. 05-482-001(JLL)

1/27/12

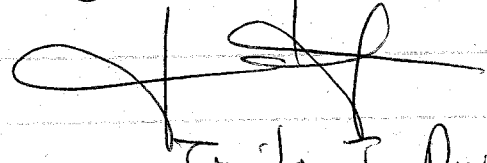
Dear Clerk of the Court,

Enclosed please find my letter to Judge Linares regarding my post-rehabilitation efforts.

Please record this document on my court docket sheet. I also request an update of my court docket sheet.

Thank you in advance for your prompt response.

Sincerely Yours,



Jamila T. Davis

Jamila Davis #59255-053
Danbury Federal Prison Camp
33 1/2 Pembroke Rd
Danbury CT 06811

1/27/12

Re: Docket No. 05-482-001(JLL)

Dear Honorable Jose Linares,


Enclosed please find two recent articles regarding the community outreach group I am involved in at Danbury Federal Prison Camp.

I would like the court to take record of the content of the CHOICES program and the effect our program is having on the community.

Although I am not ordered to participate in community service, I have made a commitment to do so as a part of my post rehabilitation efforts.

Thank you for your interest in my reformation.

Yours Truly,



Jamila T. Davis

Connecticut Department of Children and Families

January 20, 2012



No Screaming But Inmates Still Set Troubled Girls Straight

By JOSH KOVNER, jkovner@courant.com
LITCHFIELD ---

The first bombshell the women inmates dropped on the teenage girls at the Touchstone treatment center was the length of their federal prison sentences.

Ten years, minimum mandatory, for distributing cocaine. Eleven years for mail fraud and embezzlement. Twelve years for bank fraud. Twenty-six years and 10 months for distribution of cocaine base. Thirty years for conspiracy to import cocaine.

I'm in my 21st year of my 30 year sentence," the 68-year-old inmate, Phyllis, told the girls, who are living at the Touchstone campus because they've been involved in juvenile court.

You could see it in the girls' wide eyes and suddenly slack mouths. Thirty years? That's twice the time most of them have been alive.

The girls who were listening to the inmates tell their stories on Thursday were mostly 14, 15 and 16 years old.

\The next shock was how fast it all went bad for the women, inmates at the Federal Correctional Institution in Danbury.

Most had kids. Some had houses. Most dealt and ran with bad crowds, but some had straight jobs and got screwed up on drugs. A mother one day, and inmate, literally, the next.

"My first drug deal was my last," Suzzette, a 35-year-old inmate, told the girls, arrayed around tables in the tiny gym at Touchstone. "What did it cost me? Everything."

Think "Scared Straight" – the iconic program from the late 1970s and 1980s, where at-risk kids went to prisons to endure verbal sledge hammers from brawny, screaming, spittle-spewing inmates while the kids braced at attention.

Now unthink "Scared Straight" because the feds don't even fund it anymore. Turns out, it didn't stick with the kids. Tammy Sneed, director of girls programming for the state Department of Children and Families, said the program proved not to be effective long-term.



A program called Choices, presented by inmates of the Federal Correctional Institution, came to the Touchstone Residential Treatment Facility in Litchfield Thursday to talk to at risk girls to tell their personal stories and show how their own poor life choices resulted in them ending up in prison. Tammy Sneed, right, director of girl services at DCF, pats one of the 16 girls who participated in the program after she spoke during the question and answer portion of the program. (Richard Messina, Hartford Courant / January 19, 2012)

The women in Jeff Powers' troupe at the federal prison in Danbury call their monthly presentations "Choices."

Select inmates who have gained insights into their lives and crimes at workshops run by Powers and other staff go as a group, in their prison greens and grays, to juvenile residential centers, halfway houses, and even colleges to share their stories.

What the audiences get is a road map of hard lessons and missed opportunities, where it is possible to pinpoint the exact steps that led to long stretches in the unforgiving federal system.

It's a blueprint instead of a sledgehammer and the format -- which invites the girls to ask questions and then eat lunch with the women -- means that the girls end up bringing as much to the table as the women do. And both sides take from each other.

"What's money laundering?" one girl asks at Touchstone.

"It's when you accept drug money to wash it through your business. It's not the kind you put in the machine," comes the reply, to waves of laughter.

"How do you feel being in front of us," another girl asks.

"Embarrassed," a woman says.

"I wouldn't be," says the girl.

"It takes us back to our own lives coming up," another inmate says.

"How can I stay off drugs," Courtney, a bright-eyed, expressive 15 year-old in a tan hoody, asks the women. "When I go home, I can't picture how I would not be using drugs or alcohol."

The answers pour out from the women in a kind unrehearsed performance art. The rhythm of the responses sucks the girls in.

"Tell someone you trust. Hold on to the people you can talk to. Not everyone is your friend."

"Seek professional help."

"Find something you love and get involved in activities, in gym, in school."

"Love yourself, respect yourself, protect yourself, don't be afraid to be yourself."

Making Connections

Thursday, 13 of the women inmates sit on folding chairs in front of the girls, who are seated around long, rectangular tables. The gym at Touchstone is really a large, high-ceilinged room with one basketball rim. On this day, a few girls from Solnit Center South, the former Riverview Children's Hospital In Middletown, join a dozen of the Touchstone girls. Counselors and other staff members sit with the girls.

Snead, DCF's expert on girls and the former executive director of Touchstone's parent company, worked with Powers, administrator of the minimum security prison camp at the Danbury compound, to bring the presentation to girls in DCF care.

"It's not about scaring the kids or getting in their faces," Snead says. "It's about life stories, about bad choices, about family, and regents, and challenges. The girls make their own connections. Some see a family member in these women. Some have had mothers who went to prison."

The women, who range in age from 20s to 70, rise and tell the stories they have written. Powers calls them "cautionary tales." They are thoughtfully condensed sketches, with a lyrical quality.

"Ran a gambling house. Fell in love with a gambling man, a hustler, a drug dealer, a user of people," Phyllis told the girls. "I had no addictions, except to money. That is why I picked up that bag of drugs to take to New York City. Look at me now - incarcerated, living with rules, rules, and more rules. None of them are my choices."

When Marta met Carlos, they got good jobs as building superintendents and they fixed cars, Marta, a striking woman with long, jet-black hair, told the girls. "But all the money went to crack."

Marta and Carlos started dealing. Within a few months, they were busted, convicted, and imprisoned.

The inmates' lives are as diverse as their ages. They grew up in urban poverty or upper middle-

class neighborhoods. Abusive homes and loving homes. Some were on the street and on their own before they were 20; some went to college. The trap for nearly all was drug abuse.

One strong message to the girls was that no matter how outwardly successful you are, a wrong choice can you plunge to the bottom.

"I worked for the president (in the Carter White House) and three mayors," said Gwen, 70, who talks and comports herself like the quintessential executive assistant. She embezzled money. Now she's a well-spoken prison inmate.

Between stories, the women rise and describe what they lost. It is a chorus, a refrain, that speaks of what they have squandered.

"I lost everything I ever worked for my whole life. My house, the chance to be with my family."

"I lost the ability to teach my children and grandchildren the finer things in life."

"I lost my military career."

"I lost the childhoods of six beautiful children."

"I lost my freedom, my busienss, my friends."

"I had to plan my mother's funeral from prison."

"I lost my reputation and my dignity."

Looks Are Deceiving

Dominique, an outspoken 17-year-old, came from Steppingstone, Touchtstone's sister program in Waterbury, to listen to the inmates on Thursday. It was the second time she'd heard them.

"I feel stronger every time I hear this," Dominique said. "They open up the eyes. Their words, though, are actually encouraging. And it's all legit, because it really happened. "

She said she's learning that looks are deceiving.

"When they said they did cocaine and sold cocaine – that threw me. These women do not look like they have done that. I mean, that's crazy. I never knew there were so many women in prison for that long, for drugs."

At the end of the presentation, right before the women and girls sat down to lunch for more intimate conversations, the women toss out messages to the girls in rapid-fire, staccato fashion: "There's no such thing as easy money."

"There are no shortcuts."

"Finish school. Education opens all doors."

"Don't ever let a man control you and bind you."

"Crack kills."

"Find balance in your life; live within your means."

"Choose your friends carefully."

"Don't live in fear that you are not pretty enough, that you are not smart enough. Trust yourself."

Trust your gut."

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Connecticut Department of Children and Families

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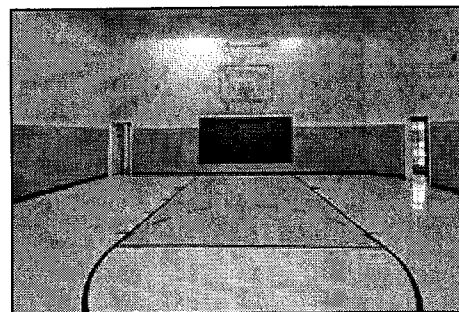
NOVEMBER 17, 2011

Looking Forward, Looking Back

Transcribed by Gary Kleeblatt

Preface by Joette Katz

Many of the adolescent girls served by the Department of Children and Families have experienced trauma -- often severe -- in the form of sexual or physical abuse, separation from family, multiple placements, and experiencing death or imprisonment of loved ones. This trauma has an indelible effect on their development, thinking and decision making. Despite the fact that these young women carry with them very difficult backgrounds, they also need to understand that their decisions can have a devastating impact on their future. This story concerns a unique encounter that we hope drives home the point that teenage girls quickly grow to become young women who can pay a high price for not making good choices.



WATERBURY -- It was just a room -- a basketball gym, actually.

But its affect was magical. The occupants travelled in time. The girls saw their future, and the women saw their past.

The space transformed relationships. The girls and the women met for the first time; they were strangers. But the girls saw their mothers in the women. And the women saw their daughters in the girls.

The response was tears and urgency.

The girls, 19 youths served by the Department of Children and Families (DCF) who had been committed to DCF as "delinquents" by a juvenile court, live at a privately-run treatment center in Waterbury called Stepping Stone. The 16 women live at the Danbury Federal Correctional Institution. The two groups met in the Stepping Stone gym one morning in mid-October so that the women could share their stories and what the stories have taught them.

The women, inmates at the prison's minimum security camp, are participating in the "Choices" program, which helps them come to terms with their crimes, their decisions, and how both affected their families, themselves and society. The women "process" and discuss their choices, they write about it, and then they talk about it publicly. It is a diverse group of women. Some are in their 20s and 30s. Several are more than 50. One woman is 70. Their sentences range from four years to more than 30 years. Many were convicted of conspiracy to sell narcotics. One was convicted of money laundering and embezzlement. Others were imprisoned for bank and mail fraud. What they had in common was deep remorse and loss.

One 37-year-old said her grandparents raised her and her two brothers after her mother was incarcerated and her father died. The woman wound up in prison herself for selling drugs

"I am from the projects, so drugs were all around me," she told the girls. "If I did not get arrested, I would not have stopped until someone killed me." She detailed how her brothers have been convicted of murder. She has

not seen her children. "All the pain I experienced, I am putting others through now," she added. "I am ashamed where my actions have taken me."

Many women spoke of the immense loss of their relationship with their children. One mother of two said she started dating a drug dealer when she was just 12. She moved to New York City with him. He cheated on her, and she began to abuse cocaine. Then she was arrested and convicted of selling drugs. "I lost 17 years to imprisonment," she said. "I lost everything. But worst is that I lost the ability to be with my children."

One of the women told the girls. "I lost my home, my business and the last 20 years. I lost the ability to be a mother and a grandmother. I would hate for you to wind up at Danbury prison."

One girl asked, "I know what it is like to visit a parent or brother in jail. How does it feel to see your kids on a visit and then have to go back in?"

The answer came quick and simple: "It was the hardest thing," said another woman. "I saw my kids grow up in prison." She said she probably saw her children 10 times over 20 years.

The girls and the women shared many things and experiences, including backgrounds growing up in hard, down-on-their-luck urban neighborhoods. "I grew up on the streets," one woman said. "I grew up using and selling drugs -- that was the lifestyle."

"When you get to prison, you realize how disgusting it is and how disgusting the harm is that you are doing to your family, friends and community," she continued. "It is a domino effect."

Several of the women talked about being abused -- physically and sexually -- as they grew up, about parents and siblings who died or who went to prison, about drugs being everywhere, "I repeated everything, and relived the cycle," one woman said. "The first few months in prison I would wake up in the middle of the night thinking it was a nightmare. It is not a nightmare. It is real."

Yet despite the difficult environments the women grew up in, they expressed no doubt what got them into prison: their own bad decisions.

"Don't make the same mistakes I made."

"Make better choices."

"This is the time to start over. Don't let your past dictate your future."

"Think before you act -- don't wind up where we are."

"Think about the consequences of your actions, especially on your loved ones."

The words hit the girls hard. Several girls left the room in tears, including one girl who sat with her own mother -- who herself had just been released from prison. This mother-daughter pair came back into the gym a few minutes later and listened. Two of the girls asked if they could send letters to the women.

"This is a real eye-opener," one of the girls told the women. "Thank you. This took a lot of courage. I will think before I act."

After the women spoke to the girls about their experience, two of the girls sang a song they wrote about the pain of having lost one or both of their parents. One of the two girls, whose mother recently got out of prison and attended the event, was able to express her pain to the women in a way she was never able to do directly to her mother. The women shed tears as they recognized that this song could have been sung by one of their own children. It was apparent that the women and the girls understood the pain they shared, and they eagerly huddled together around tables for lunch and to have more intimate conversations.

Jeff Powers, Executive Assistant/Camp Administrator at the Danbury facility, created the program to help the women take responsibility. "It is very cathartic," Mr. Powers said. "A lot of them are looking at things differently." He said bringing the women to Stepping Stone is particularly meaningful to the women because almost all are mothers, and they have limited chances to interact with their own children. "By sharing their stories, they can help others from taking the same path," he said. "This is one way they can reach out to kids. When they were given the opportunity with at risk kids, they were very excited."

Tammy Sneed, the DCF director of girls' services who arranged for the women to come to Stepping Stone, said the meeting was powerful. "Some of the girls have moms and dads in prison," said Ms. Sneed. "They also saw themselves in the women and saw it as a last chance for themselves." Ms. Sneed said the loss of family is particularly meaningful to the girls. "They see a direct connection to the loss of family and the decisions they make," she said. "The point is that this is your life and your family on the line."

The girls got it. Two of them, who serve on the Girls' Advisory Board to help the Department improve how it serves girls, said the lesson was very clear.

"I could end up like one of them -- losing my family and my freedom," said 17-year-old Dominique C. of New Haven. "I could end up in the same predicament, if I continue to do what I do."

"I have to start thinking before I act," she said.

Briana W., a 16-year-old from Meriden, said the women demonstrated how just one decision can change your life. "I've made wrong decisions, and they showed how important it is to go down the right path. It showed me the right path to go down."

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